**Wisdom Teeth and Pain**

The pain caused by wisdom teeth before they are extracted is normally due to one of two factors.

The most common cause of wisdom tooth pain before an extraction is infection.

[Wisdom teeth](http://www.murnaneoralsurgery.com/) are the last teeth to erupt into your mouth. Because of this they do not have enough room to erupt into a normal position and wisdom teeth tend to be pushed around and erupt at awkward angles. All these reasons make it more difficult to clean wisdom teeth. Bacteria and food debris build up around wisdom teeth resulting in acute infection with pain and swelling. Chronic low grade infection over years may result in the formation of periodontal pockets, and chronic periodontal disease.

The second main cause of pain before the extraction of wisdom teeth is caries in the wisdom teeth or the teeth in front of the wisdom tooth. Pain on using hot or cold foods and liquids and tenderness to bite down on the teeth usually indicates pain due to decay. This type of pain should reduce immediately upon removing the wisdom teeth and may be alleviated in the short term by placing a temporary dressing in a tooth.

Post operative pain after the removal of wisdom teeth is normally due to the trauma of the extraction which would normally respond to NSAIDS and reduce in severity over several days. The more difficult the extraction the more trauma caused and the more pain you will experience after the extraction is completed

The pain may be aggravated by post operative infection. This may be a flare up of preexisting infection or it may be an infection which arises after the extraction.

Infection will increase the amount of pain you will experience, will prevent the wound from healing and prolong the period of time that you will experience pain. It is important that both local measures and systemic measures are used to control infection. Local measures include the use of warm salty water and *corsodyl* mouth rinses to remove debris from the wisdom tooth socket and reduce the bacterial load in the socket.

Systemic measures include the use of antibiotic therapy to eliminate bacteria from the blood stream, from the area surrounding the extraction site and finally from the surgical wound. Bed rest so the body can concentrate its efforts on fighting infection, a nutritious diet and frequent fluid intake all help the body to fight infection.

Dry Socket is unfortunately a common cause of pain after the removal of wisdom teeth or after any dental extraction. It occurs in about 4 % of people and is of an unknown cause. It manifests as pain which starts about 3 days after the extraction. The pain is intense, responds poorly or not at all to analgesics, is unaffected by the use of antibiotics. The pain will usually resolve within ten days to two weeks, but on rare occasions may last much longer. It has been known to place dressings in the wounds to attempt to alleviate the pain. This may work in the short term but it will increase the duration of the dry socket as the dressing will slow the healing process.